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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO TO BEGIN FIRST MAP CYCLE IN FALL 2010

Classified By: POLAD K. Degnan, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Allies agreed unanimously at a meeting of the Senior Political Committee on January 7, 2010 that Montenegro should begin its first Membership Action Plan (MAP) cycle in the fall of 2010, after the full completion of its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). This course of action was contrary to the one originally proposed by the International Staff (I.S.), which suggested that Montenegro transition this spring to a shortened MAP cycle to be completed by summer 2010 and begin a second MAP cycle in the fall. Allies agreed Montenegro was not ready to begin a shortened MAP cycle, the rush was unnecessary, and that such a course might prejudice Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) should Ministers decide in April 2010 that it was ready to join Montenegro in MAP. End Summary.

Montenegro's MAP Cycle

¶2. (C) On December 9, 2009, directly after the Brussels NATO Ministerial in which Foreign Ministers agreed that Montenegro would be invited to join MAP, the I.S. issued a "way forward" paper in which it proposed that Montenegro transition this spring to a shortened MAP cycle to be completed by summer 2010 (out of a concern that the I.S. would not be in line with the December 2009 decision by Foreign Ministers if it waited to have Montenegro enter the MAP cycle in fall 2010). All previous MAP countries have operated on a school year calendar submitting their Annual National Programs (ANP) in the fall and receiving their assessments in late spring (Macedonia remains on that schedule). However, according to the I.S. proposed plan, after Montenegro completed a truncated spring MAP cycle, it would proceed immediately to preparing a new ANP for a second MAP cycle in the fall. Allies uniformly saw this approach as a "short-circuiting" of the IPAP process and also worried that it would deny BiH the possibility to "catch up" with Montenegro in time to join it in a fall 2010 MAP cycle. Allies also noted that Montenegro was willing to finish its IPAP cycle as planned in the spring and move to MAP in the fall. Albania reported Montenegrin officials said they would need four months to adequately prepare an ANP. Noting the unanimity of opinion, the I.S. said it would reissue its "Way Forward" paper to propose: (i) that Montenegro conclude its current IPAP cycle and meet with Allies for an IPAP assessment in the spring of 2010; (ii) that the I.S. would travel to Podgorica in March 2010 for a "MAP" visit (labeled as such for political reasons) to discuss with Montenegro its plan for MAP and the ANP process in the fall; and (iii) that Montenegro would start its first MAP cycle in the fall of ¶2010.

"Active Review" of BiH's Reform

¶3. (C) Also during the meeting, the United Kingdom noted that Foreign Ministers, in their Communique, tasked the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to keep BiH's progress on political

reforms under "active review" to determine when it becomes eligible for MAP. The U.K. asked the I.S. if it had a plan for the "active review." The I.S. responded that the review would proceed under two mechanisms in the normal course of NATO business: (i) BiH's IPAP cycle and IPAP review this spring and (ii) the potential visit of the NAC to Sarajevo this spring. The Chair said the I.S. would be happy to follow-up with any additional "active review" reports as tasked by Allies.

DAALDER